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SUBJECT: REACTION TO PUTIN'S VISIT TO JORDAN

REF: AMMAN 659

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN MET WITH KING ABDULLAH ON REGIONAL ISSUES AND ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION DURING HIS VISIT FEBRUARY 12-13. PUTIN ALSO MET SEPARATELY WITH PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) SEE SEPTEL FOR AN INITIAL READOUT ON PRESIDENT PUTIN'S DISCUSSIONS WITH KING ABDULLAH ON IRAN.

PUTIN CALLS FOR PEACE CONFERENCE

13. (C) DURING A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH KING ABDULLAH FEBRUARY 13, PUTIN REITERATED HIS CALL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - WITH SYRIAN PARTICIPATION - ON ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICTS. KING ABDULLAH RESPONDED THAT JORDAN VALUES RUSSIA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS AIMED AT ACHIEVING SECURITY, AND SAID THAT JORDAN SUPPORTS ANY EFFORT THAT LEADS TO REGIONAL PEACE. COMMENT: POST HAS SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT THE GOJ PLANS TO TAKE ANY ACTIVE STEPS IN SUPPORT OF PUTIN'S PROPOSAL. END COMMENT.

OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES

14. (U) KING ABDULLAH AND PRESIDENT PUTIN ALSO EXPRESSED IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE A "MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENSURE IRAQ'S UNITY, STABILITY, AND SECURITY;" AND THEIR BELIEF THAT "A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION TO IRAN'S NUCLEAR STANDOFF WITH THE WEST MUST BE FOUND (SEPTEL)."

MEETS WITH ABU MAZEN

15. (U) PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE, PUTIN MET WITH PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS (ABU MAZEN), WHO MAINTAINS A RESIDENCE IN AMMAN. ACCORDING TO MEDIA, ABBAS TOLD PUTIN THAT THE MECCA AGREEMENT WOULD LEAD TO A PALESTINIAN NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT, AND THAT RUSSIA PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT. PUTIN REPLIED THAT ONLY AN EFFECTIVE PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE STEPS TOWARD A FULL-FLEDGED SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL, AND THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO BRING ABOUT THE RELEASE OF CORPORAL SHALIT.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS

16. (U) JORDAN AND RUSSIA CONCLUDED SEVERAL BILATERAL AGREEMENTS DURING PUTIN'S VISIT INCLUDING: THE SALE TO JORDAN FOR USD 35 MILLION OF SIX KA-226 HELICOPTERS AND TO ESTABLISH A JOINT VENTURE TO PRODUCE, REPAIR, AND SELL KA-226 HELICOPTERS IN JORDAN; AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN RUSSIAN CAR MAKER AVTOVAZ AND A JORDANIAN COMPANY TO MANUFACTURE RUSSIAN-MADE CARS; AN AGREEMENT ON THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF

INVESTMENTS; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL.

¶7. (U) ON FEBRUARY 13, PUTIN AND KING ABDULLAH SIGNED AND ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT. HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

--AGREEMENT TO ENSURE THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND TO RENDER THE MIDDLE EAST AN AREA FREE OF ATOMIC, CHEMICAL, OR BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION.

--AGREEMENT TO ENHANCE COOPERATION IN FIGHTING ORGANIZED INTERNATIONAL CRIME, ESPECIALLY MONEY LAUNDERING, DRUG TRAFFICKING, ARMS SMUGGLING, AND THE TRAFFICKING OF HUMANS.

--COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE AMMAN MESSAGE (NOTE: JORDAN'S INITIATIVE, LAUNCHED IN 2004, TO ENCOURAGE MAINSTREAM MUSLIM AUTHORITIES TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST TAKFIRIS) AND FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH MODERATE ISLAMIC FORCES TO ELIMINATE TERRORISM AND RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM.

--REJECTION OF ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS BY FORCE.

MEDIA COVERAGE POSITIVE

¶8. (U) EDITORIALS GENERALLY PRAISED PUTIN FOR HIS CRITICISM OF THE U.S. IN MUNICH. ONE TYPICAL EDITORIAL IN THE POPULIST AL-ARAB AL-YOWM DAILY CLAIMED THERE IS A "YEARNING FOR THE EPOCH IN WHICH THE RUSSIAN BEAR AT THE HEAD OF THE SOVIET UNION SERVED AS A BRAKE FOR WASHINGTONS INDULGENCE."

¶9. (U) SULTAN HATTAB WROTE IN THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI THAT FRUSTRATION WITH AMERICAN POLICIES PUSHES AMERICA'S ALLIES TO WELCOME RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN THE HOPE FOR FAIR AND BALANCED POLICIES, AND THAT PUTIN ARRIVED AT A TIME WHEN "AMERICAN TROOPS CONTINUE TO POUR INTO IRAQ, CREATING A VITAL NEED FOR A WIDER AND DEEPER ROLE FOR RUSSIA."

¶10. (U) THE CHIEF EDITOR OF THE LIBERAL AL-GHAD, AYMAN AL-SAFADI, WROTE THAT "WE ARE IN AN AMERICAN AGE, AND PUTIN'S TOUGHNESS AND PEOPLE'S YEARNING FOR THE PAST WILL NOT CHANGE THE CURRENT SITUATION. THE WORLD WILL CONTINUE TO PAY THE PRICE OF U.S. UNILATERALISM."

¶11. (U) STATE-RUN JORDANIAN TV GAVE EXTENSIVE AND PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE PUTIN VISIT, EVEN COVERING IN FULL HIS ELABORATE ARRIVAL CEREMONY AT THE AIRPORT. THIS POSITIVE TREATMENT GAVE THE VISIT ADDED IMPORTANCE TO THE GENERAL JORDANIAN PUBLIC.
HALE